

ADE DAILY NEWS CLIPS

April 14, 2013

Greenbrier teams heading to state competition (Log Cabin Democrat)

GREENBRIER — The Greenbrier School District DestiNation Imagination teams were invited to host the Northern Region competition held March 2. Fourteen Greenbrier teams entered with 65 Regional teams and earned the honors to attend the DI State Competition that was held April 6 at Benton School District.

Of the 84 teams from Arkansas participating at the DI State Competition, 13 Greenbrier teams were represented very well with 11 Greenbrier teams placing in the top four in their divisions.

Robin Clark, Project Coordinator for Greenbrier Schools, said, “I want everyone to know that Greenbrier DI teams have developed a great reputation across the state. On several occasions, DI challenge masters, appraisers and team managers from other schools bragged on our students — both in team performance and behavior!”

The following five teams will represent Greenbrier and Arkansas at Destination ImagiNation Global Finals May 21-25 at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville:

Greenbrier Jr. High: Team Managers, Lisa Rust/Shannon Spainhour; Loren Rust — 8th; Stephen Spainhour — 8th; Michael Oluokun — 8th; Jett McCullough — 8th; Makayla Palmer — 8th; Seth McGee — 8th; Maya Cuatpotzo — 7th.

Greenbrier High School: Team Managers, Erin Lewter/Cherie Hall; Hannah Lewter — 10th; Amanda Hall — 10th; Meredith Hammontree — 10th; Will Ratliff — 10th; Matthew Spainhour — 10th; Emily Weaver — 10th; Wyatt Daniels — 9th

Greenbrier Jr. High: Team Managers, Melinda Hollenbaugh/Misti Hollenbaugh; Zachariah Hollenbaugh — 9th; Alex Dixon — 9th; Addie Beth Sanderlin — 9th; Jared Casebier — 9th; Caroline Harrod — 9th; Tate Zellner — 9th.

Greenbrier High School: Team Managers, Melinda Hollenbaugh/Misti Hollenbaugh; Marissa Hollenbaugh — 11th; Cooper Matthews — 11th; Nate Hawk — 11th; Kallee King — 11th.

Wooster Elementary: Team Managers, Teresa Jackson/Natasha Raney; Whitley Raney — 4th; Asher Jackson — 4th; Jordan Gould — 4th; Marlee Vanover — 3rd; Abby Brackett — 4th; Hannah Stubbs — 4th.

Two other Greenbrier D-I teams placed second. One team took third place, and three teams placed fourth in the state tournament.

Students work on their creative problem solving challenges for months before a competition. Many large corporations like Apple, Disney, Texas Instruments, 3M, and Motorola help sponsor DI, but without the constant support of many parents and teachers in each community, it could not endure. Everyone can volunteer to help or sponsor a team. A small donation for a season's ribbons, awards, and tournament expenses can start a team. For more information or to get involved, contact Mike Mitchell, Arkansas State Director at 501-520-7337 or visit www.ArkansasDI.org.

Act brakes loss of isolated school funds (Newton Co. Times)

OARK — "Great news!" That was the way Superintendent Kerry Saylor addressed the Jasper Board of Education at its regular monthly meeting held last Thursday night, April 11, at the Oark School campus. He was referring to the news that Gov. Mike Beebe signed House Bill 2023 in to law on Monday, April 8. The new law, "Act 1005" slows the eventual phase out of isolated school funding.

Board to discuss Brandon Burlsworth film (Harrison Daily News)

There will be movie talk at the Tuesday, April 16, meeting of the Harrison Board of Education.

The board will be discussing the upcoming release of a movie about the life of Brandon Burlsworth, a Harrison graduate who went on to play football at the University of Arkansas, was drafted into the NFL, but was killed in a car accident shortly afterward.

A number of items will also be under consideration, including summer school, summer bus usage and food service meal prices.

The meeting will be at 6 p.m. at the administration building located at 110 South Cherry Street. The meeting is open to the public.

Central High student wins fair's top science honor (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

Little Rock Central High School student Ayush Saraswat was the top individual winner at the 2013 Southwest Energy Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway.

The 59th annual science fair competition, which was held March 30-31, drew 248 competitors from the state's high schools. Students qualified for the state competition through top placement in regional science fairs.

Saraswat is the recipient of a \$500 prize for his computer science project titled "MEye: An Affordable Eye-Tracking System."

Kwang Tang, also a student at Central High, received the fair's Best in State honors and a \$500 prize for his project titled "Minimizing Drag Coefficients by Augmenting a Neoteric Computational Algorithm with Computerized Optimization."

Dana Abulez and Devyani Shekhawat of Central High received both first place and Best in State honors for their team project titled "Nano-Texture Based Transparent Super hydrophobic Coating on Aluminum Lattice Templates and Glass Substrates for Anti-Icing Applications and the Welfare of the Military and Aeronautics Industry."

The four Central High first-place winners will now lead a delegation of science award-winning students to compete in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Phoenix May 12-17.

While Saraswat was the first place individual award winner at the state event, Osvaldo Cossio of Little Rock's Parkview High School was the second-place individual winner for a biochemistry project titled "The Effect of Bio enhancers on the Rate of Bio degradation of Crude Oil."

The third-place individual winner was Hanya Qureshi of Pulaski Academy in Little Rock for an engineering materials and bioengineering project titled "Surgical Spinal Instrumentation: Assessment of Cross-Link Design based on Shear Strength."

Dhruba Dasgupta of Central High was the fourth-place individual winner for an energy and transportation project titled "The Effect of CdSe Quantum Dots on Organic Photovoltaic Devices."

Southwest Energy L.P. and the state Department of Education are paying for registration, meals, housing and transportation to the international fair for the state's top four individual winners and the first-place team winners.

Fifth-place individual honors and the opportunity to be an observer at the international fair went to Nyle Nayga of the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts in Hot Springs. Sixth place and the opportunity to be an observer went to Rachel Lynch from the Alpena School District.

Besides Tang, who was the first-place Best in State award winner, and Saraswat, who was second-place winner, other Best in State winners were Elizabeth Spicer of Fayetteville's Ramay Junior High, who won third place for her project titled "Winglets for Wind Turbines"; Trisha Bhattacharyya of Central High who took fourth place for "The Effect of Microfullerenes on Organic Photovoltaic"; and Clayton Davis of the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts, who won fifth place for "An Experimental Study of the Route to Chaos in Chua's Circuit."

The following is a list of regional science winners announced at the state competition: Central Region individual finalists: Trisha Bhattacharyya, Kwang Tang, Sarthak Garg, all from Central High High.

Northeast Region individual finalists: Ellie Stafford, Douglas MacArthur Junior High in Jonesboro School District; Tabitha Hudseth, Nettleton High.

Northwest Region individual finalists: Elizabeth Spicer, Fayetteville's Ramay Junior High; Kent Huang, Alpena High.

Northwest Region team finalists: Kate Woolverton and Black Bradberry, Haas Hall Academy in Fayetteville.

Southeast Region individual finalist: Noel Cary Philley, Crossett High.

West Central Region individual finalists: Blaise Bryan Koch and Clayton Davis, Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts.

The Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts in Hot Springs won the first-place school trophy at the state fair.

Central High won the second-place trophy. Fayetteville High won third; Alpena High, fourth, and Pulaski Academy in Little Rock, fifth place.

The trophies are awarded based on a system in which the number of points a school accumulates for awards is divided by the total number of projects entered in the fair.

CATEGORY AWARD WINNERS Animal Science First place: Wilson Guillory, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts. Second place: Bri-Ellen Millsap, Alma High. Third place: Kayla Bishop, Alma High. Honorable mention: Bobby Brown, Little Rock Parkview High; Michelle Qui, Fayetteville High; Sebastian Edward, Fayetteville High; and Enoch Park, Pulaski Academy. Behavioral & Social Science First place: Kendall Coats, Fayetteville High. Second place: Domonick Esparza, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts. Third place: Tazin Islam, Central High. Honorable mention: Sarah Martin, Pulaski Academy; Katherine Parham, Alma High; Max Mennemeier, Pulaski Academy; and Natalie Kemp, Pulaski Academy.

Biochemistry First place: Osvaldo Cossio, Parkview High. Second place: Alex Shell, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts. Third place: Saxyam Gautam, Fayetteville High. Honorable mention: Karam Sra, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts; Raiyan Syed, Central High; Zain Saleemuddin, Central High; Noor Alshami, Pulaski Academy; Linda Tian, Ridgeway Christian in Pine Bluff; and Olivia Davis, Fort Smith's Chaffin Junior High.

Cellular and Molecular Biology First place: Katie Welch, Alpena High. Second place: Brendon Song, Central High. Third place: Mehr Shah, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts. Honorable mention: Rachana Kombathula, Central High, and Shruti Shah, Central High.

Chemistry First place: Hayden Burger, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts. Second place: Nishita Patel, Central High. Third place: Sonya Mehta, Central High. Honorable mention: Katrina Sims, Alpena High; Lauren Jackson, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts; Edward Zhao, Central High; and Glenda Scott, Arkansas School for the Deaf.

Computer Science First place: Ayush Saraswat, Central High. Second place: Larissa Markwardt, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts. Third place: Russell Bryan, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts. Honorable mention: Patrick Stransky, Alma High, and Zen Tang, Central High.

Earth and Planetary Science First place: Taylor Flynn, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts. Second place: Tyler Graham, White Hall High. Third place: Taylor Hensley, Alpena High. Honorable mention: Elma Abdullah, Central High; Peyton Wagner, Alma High; Liz Lawrence, Ridgeway Christian; and Jessika Meier, Pulaski Academy.

Energy and Transport First place: Dhruva Dasgupta, Central High. Second place: Talesha Thomas, Alpena High. Third place: Nimit Gandhi, Central High. Honorable mention: Nishant Patel, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts; Kyle Christenson, Pulaski Academy; Nila Ray, White Hall High; and Elizabeth Graf, Central High.

Engineering: Electrical and Mechanical First place: Nyle Nayga, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts. Second place: Will Welch, Alpena High. Third place: Garry Liu, Central High. Honorable mention: Aaron Klappenbach, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts; Justin McClure, Fayetteville High; Rohan Manjanatha, Central High; and Levi Jones, Glen Rose High.

Engineering: Materials and Bioengineering First place: Hanya Qureshi, Pulaski Academy. Second place: Demetrius McCullough, Ridgeway Christian. Third place: Errick Jackson, Central High. Honorable mention: Zeferin Turturro, Lisa Academy-North in Sherwood; and Erik Khamphouy, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts.

Environmental Management First place: Rachel Lynch, Alpena High. Second place: Roshaneh Ali, Central High. Third place: Audrey Timmerman, Haas Hall Academy. Honorable mention: Caitlin McGough, Ridgeway Christian; Mark Mastroanni, Haas Hall Academy; Madison He?in, Ridgeway Christian; and Alston Tyer, Haas Hall Academy.

Environmental Sciences First place: Ian Stone, Pulaski Academy. Second place: Peyton Aulds, Ridgeway Christian. Third place: Dewayne Goldmon, Ridgeway Christian. Honorable mention: An Yang, Fort Smith Chaffin Junior High; Arrington Balfour, MacArthur Junior High in Jonesboro; Jasmine Rowland, Ridgeway Christian, and Zachary Renfo, Fayetteville High.

Mathematics First place: Tyler Mlaka, Alma High. Second place: Guo Wang, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts. Third place: Elijah Linn, Fort Smith's Ramsey Junior High. Honorable mention: Ryan Kaufmann, Central High; Ethan Sun, Pulaski Academy; and Kate Truitt, Ramsey Junior High.

Medicine and Health First place: Andrew Gu, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts. Second place: Dimple Shah, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts. Third place: Michael Stout, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts. Honorable mention: Ashraf Moursi, Pulaski Academy; and Emily Hollansworth, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts.

Microbiology First place: Hayley Adkinsson, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts. Second place: B.J. Osterberger, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts. Third place: Nadia Safar, Pulaski Academy. Honorable mention: Camila Vargas, Pulaski Academy; Pooja Suri, Central High; and Pranav Kolluru, Central High.

Physics and Astronomy First place: Erik Monson, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts. Second place: Toni Lunnemann, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts. Third place:

Mohammed Asif, Central High. Honorable mention: Lauren Lafarlette, Alma High; and Tanner Clements, Parkview High.

Plant Sciences First place: Jacob Andersen, Ridgeway Christian. Second place: Rocklan McCall, Riverside High. Third place: Ragul Manoharan, Central High. Honorable mention: Tierin Burrow, Fayetteville High; Caroline Honea, Central High; and Nikita Das, Central High.

Team Projects First place: Dana Abulez and Devyani Shekhawat, Central High. Second place: Jacob Bowman and Hunter Carnes, White Hall High. Third place (Tie): Shelby Carney and Sarah Rehtin, Fayetteville High; and Yilan Jiangliu and Ziming Zhang, Lisa Academy in Little Rock.

SPECIAL AWARDS Sigma Xi Outstanding Research Project: Andrew Gu, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts.

T-shirt design winner: Kayla Bishop, Alma High. Honorable mention: Nishita Patel, Central High.

Arkansas Environmental Education Association Award for outstanding environmental science project: Tabitha Hudspeth, Nettleton High.

Axiom Award for projects that best use computer science: First place: Zen Tang, Central High. Second place: Kwang Tang, Central High.

Arkansas Energy Office of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission best energy-related project: Dhruva Dasgupta, Central High, and the student's teacher, Patrick Foley, Central High.

American Fisheries Society, Arkansas Chapter, best aquatic science award: First place: Noel Philley, Crossett High and the student's teacher, Sarah Storm. Honorable mention: Anna Rougeau, Nettleton High; Taylor Flynn, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts; Osvaldo Cossio, Parkview High; Wilson Guillory, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts.

American Meteorological Society best project related to meteorology: Tyler Graham, White Hall High.

American Psychological Association outstanding project related to behavioral science: Kendall Coats, Fayetteville High.

Arkansas Computer Science Teachers Association Award given to top two computer science projects: Ayush Saraswat, Central High, and Larissa Markwardt, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts.

Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission projects related to preserving Arkansas' natural heritage: Sebastian Edwards, Fayetteville High; Taylor Flynn, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts; Anna Rougeau, Nettleton High; Noel Philley, Crossett High.

Arkansas Chapter of the Wildlife Society for the best project related to wildlife or wildlife conservation: Wilson Guillory, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts.

ASM International Foundation best project related to materials science: Hanya Qureshi, Pulaski Academy.

Association for Women Geoscientists Foundation best project related to geoscience done by a female student: Taylor Flynn, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts.

Griffin Award, given by UCA for creativity in research in the life sciences: Osvaldo Cossio, Parkview High, and the student's teacher Les Williams.

Intel Excellence in Computer Science for first place project in computer science: Ayush Saraswat, Central High.

Mu Alpha Theta most outstanding project in mathematics: Tyler Mlaka, Alma High.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration most outstanding project related to NOAA's research goal: Roshaneh Ali, Central High.

National Society of Professional Engineers for project that uses the most innovative engineering: Will Welch, Alpena High.

Ricoh Corp. for Environmental Sustainable Technologies for the project that most supports environmentally sustainable development: Rachel Lynch, Alpena High.

Society for In Vitro Biology for outstanding achievement, ability, and creativity in in-vitro biology: Sarthak Garg, Central High.

Society for Neuroscience-Arkansas Chapter for projects related to neuroscience: Dimple Shah, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts.

Stockholm Junior Water Prize, sponsored by the Water Environment Foundation, for outstanding water-related projects: Peyton Aulds, Ridgeway Christian, and Ian Stone, Pulaski Academy.

University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Mentor Award for outstanding projects in medicine and health in rural communities: Tristan Anderson, Alma High, and Victoria Minor, Cross County High.

U.S. Geological Survey best geology-related project: Taylor Flynn, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts.

U.S. Metric Association for best use of the International System of Units: Taylor Hensley, Alpena High.

U.S. Air Force Awards Outstanding Projects: Math - Tyler Mlaka, Alma High; Computer science - Ayush Saraswat, Central High; Engineering - Nyle Nayga, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts; Physics - Erik Monson, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts.

Yale Science and Engineering Award for outstanding 11th-grade project in chemistry, computer science, engineering or physics: Ayush Saraswat, Central High.

O.M. Prince Award presented by the UCA physics department for most outstanding physics project: Erik Monson, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts.

U.S. Public Health Services Surgeon General's Certificate of Appreciation: Andrew Gu, School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts.

Arkansas Environmental Federation's Outstanding Environmental Science projects: First Place - Rachel Lynch, Alpena High, and student's teacher, David Good. Second place - Osvaldo Cossio, Parkview High, and the student's teacher, Les Williams.

Champ's 3rd D.C. trip near (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

Christian Boekhout, a Hot Springs seventh-grader and an unprecedented three-time state champion of the Arkansas Geographic Bee, will represent his home state next month in the National Geographic Bee in Washington, D.C.

It will be Christian's third trip to the national competition for a shot at a \$25,000 college scholarship, a trip to the Galapagos Islands, and a chance to share the stage with the famed Alex Trebek of the Jeopardy! game show.

Trebek has said this 25th anniversary year of the National Geographic Bee will be his last year to serve as host. As part of the anniversary celebration, the National Geographic Society has invited more guests and moved the event to a larger venue, the National Theatre.

Christian said in an interview that the national anniversary gave him extra motivation to win this year's state bee.

"This is the year I want to go more than any other year," he said about Washington, D.C. "It was in the back of my mind, 'You have to do this. You have to do this. You have to do this.' So I'm really, really relieved that I get to go. It's going to be a lot bigger. They are going to have it in a theater across from the president's house on Pennsylvania Avenue. It just seems so special."

The 12-year-old pupil at Hot Springs Middle School earned the repeat trip by winning the state Geographic Bee on April 5 on the campus of the University of Central Arkansas in Conway.

The state bee is for 100 fourth-through-eighth graders who won their local school bees and earned qualifying scores on a geography test. Nationwide, pupils at nearly 11,000 schools participate in geography bees.

"As far as we can determine Christian is the first in Arkansas to have won three times," Julie Hill, the bee's state coordinator, said in an e-mail and added, "He is a neat kid and has always loved geography."

Christian, captivated with atlases and globes since age 5, has won his school's Geographic Bee every year since second grade but he was not eligible to go to the state level contest until fourth grade, when he placed sixth as a 9-year-old from Hot Springs' Park International Baccalaureate Elementary School.

After that - fifth, sixth and seventh grades - it's been nothing but top honors for Christian.

This year Christian won the state contest by knowing the name of the city that is the home of the Hermitage Museum and is on the Neva River at the head of the Gulf of Finland.

St. Petersburg in Russia is the answer.

Sojas Wagle, a sixth-grader at Helen Tyson Middle School in Springdale, earned second-place honors at the state bee, Hill said.

Third place went to Aryan Rai, another sixth-grader and a student at Brightfield Middle School in the Bentonville School District.

In 2011, Christian's first year at the national contest, he finished about 30th or in the middle of the pack, his mother, Sandra Billie, said last week. In 2012, he was 17th, she said.

His goal this year is to be among the top 10 finishers. But even after this year, Christian as an eighth-grader next year will have one more year of eligibility to compete.

He prepares for geography competition about three to five hours a week, but there are growing demands that pull at his geography time, Billie said.

"Distracted? Oh my, yes. He is involved in a lot other activities," she said, not the least of which is having his own phone and texting with friends.

"He does Quiz Bowl and he does the junior Engineering Olympics for the school," Billie enumerated. "He plays the saxophone quite well and was in the first band, first chair, selected for All-Region for alto sax. He plays soccer and basketball on teams."

Despite all that, the passion for geography doesn't wane, Billie said.

Christian continues to refer to his two dozen atlases and his wall maps, she said. And Google Maps and Google Earth enable him to travel virtually, enhancing Christian's real life travels to places such as Canada, or Japan, which is the home of his grandmother, and Aruba, where his father, Milton Boekhout, is from.

Christian said he likes online geography games and geography bee preparation books by Robert Pierce. He also counts on his 9-year-old sister, Liliana Boekhout, to quiz him.

Billie said her son's past success creates raised expectations from others.

“There are a lot of people watching him now with each of these competitions. They know who he is when he walks onto the campus at UCA.”

“So it is a little bit more pressure,” she said, “but he comes out of competitions all the time saying, ‘Wow, that was so much fun!’ That’s what keeps him going.”

Organized by the National Geographic Society, the 2013 National Geographic Bee, set for May 20-22, is sponsored by Google. At the state level, the bee also is sponsored by Plum Creek Foundation.

National Geographic developed the National Geographic Bee in 1989 in response to concern about the lack of geographic knowledge among young people in the United States. Nationwide, pupils at nearly 11,000 schools participated in geography bees in November.

Jacksonville-school petition starts (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

Leaders of a drive to establish a new Jacksonville/North Pulaski County school district are seeking as many as 4,000 signatures on a petition that asks the state Board of Education to set an election on the proposal, said Daniel Gray, a spokesman for the Jacksonville/North Pulaski County Education Corps.

The number of valid signatures actually needed may be less than half that. Planners for a new district have estimated between 1,300 and 2,000 will be sufficient.

House Bill 1632, sponsored by Rep. Mark Perry, D-Jacksonville, and passed by both the House and Senate, says a petition for an election on forming a school district must be signed by at least 10 percent of the number of voters who participated in the most recent general election.

Perry said Friday that he expects the bill to be signed by Gov. Mike Beebe on Monday or Tuesday.

“The best indication I know of is that the number of signatures required would be approximately 2,000,” Perry said about the Jacksonville drive.

“We will gather as many as needed,” Perry said, “with an expected overage amount to guarantee we do not fall short.”

To be valid and counted by the secretary of state’s office, the signatures must be from registered voters who live within the boundaries of the proposed school district. The School Board for the Pulaski County Special School District had approved proposed boundaries encompassing Jacksonville and the city’s outlying areas for a new district before that board was dissolved in 2011 by the state for unrelated financial matters.

The petition drive and the clarifying legislation are the latest developments in what has been a decades-old effort by some in Jacksonville to form a new district out of a part of the Pulaski County Special School District.

The Jacksonville/North Pulaski County Education Corps on April 2 announced the petition drive for an election on forming a new, approximately 100-square mile district. The targeted area includes 10 of the Pulaski County Special School District's operating school campuses- including Jacksonville and North Pulaski High schools, two currently unused campuses and one of the county district's school bus depots. The new district would have an estimated 4,400 students.

"We're rocking and rolling," Daniel Gray, a Jacksonville real estate agent and father of two school-age sons, said last week about the drive.

He said some 75 people volunteered to circulate the petitions after the April 2 announcement.

"I don't have a count on where it stands, but it's going well," he said.

Gray said he anticipates counting the signatures within the next several days and then scheduling signing events at central locations in the city if the count shows that such events are needed.

Organizers of the petition drive plan to report to the state Board of Education in May on their efforts and present the petitions to the same board in June, Gray said. The petition asks that a special election on the formation of a district be held at the next school election, which would be in September, or as soon as possible thereafter.

The state board would likely ask for guidance on the issue from U.S. District Judge D. Price Marshall Jr. before scheduling a special election in the proposed district, Gray and other Jacksonville planners have said.

Marshall is the presiding judge in the 30-year-old federal Pulaski County school desegregation lawsuit involving the state and the Little Rock, North Little Rock and Pulaski County Special school systems.

A different federal judge presiding in the same long-running lawsuit in 2003 shut down a Jacksonville effort to form a separate district, saying in part that the new district would hinder desegregation efforts in the existing districts.

Since then, the Little Rock and North Little Rock school districts have been declared unitary, or desegregated, and released from court supervision of their desegregation efforts.

The Pulaski County Special district remains under court supervision but has asked for release in some areas of its operation. That will be decided by the judge after court hearings scheduled for later this year.

Despite their release from court supervision, the Little Rock and North Little Rock districts continue to participate with the Pulaski County Special district in interdistrict student transfer programs - magnet schools and the Majority-to-Minority program in which students can cross district lines from a district where their race is in the majority to one where they will be in the minority.

Gray has said planners expect a new Jacksonville district to participate in the interdistrict student transfer programs.

In addition to specifying the calculation for petition signatures, House Bill 1632, if signed into law, would authorize a transition period of up to two years to enable a new school district to become fully operational.

Ideally, Gray said, after an election on a new district, the 2013-14 school year would become a transition year in which the Pulaski County Special district would continue to operate the schools in the Jacksonville area. During that time, a superintendent would be hired, and that superintendent would put into place other personnel selected for the new district.

"A lot of this hasn't been discussed at great length," Gray said about the transition period. "A lot of this has to be determined and the devil is in the details."

"We are focused now on getting signatures, presenting to the state board and getting the request in front of Judge Marshall just as soon as possible. I hope he would give some directions before August, but in August all the parties will be in the room with him."

Gray said he is unaware of any organized opposition to the plan for a new school district.

"It's been received really well. I've had some questions about the fiscal impact and whether we can afford it," he said. "I just gave them a copy of the feasibility study and encouraged them to read it. That seems to take care of any questions."

The latest feasibility study about a new district, the petition language and other information are on the Education Corps' website: www.ourowndistrict.com.

Petitions are available for signing in Jacksonville at Bart Gray Realty, First Arkansas Bank's main branch, the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce and City Hall.

Schools take lesson: Need to arm staffs (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

As the superintendent of a small, rural school district, Nancy Anderson never imagined she would one day feel the need to carry a gun on campus.

But the days when schools were seen as places of childhood innocence - immune to urban violence or deranged gunmen - are long gone, she says.

Anderson has tried in the past to get funding for a school resource officer at Cutter Morning Star, a Garland County public school district of about 600 students.

But the \$40,000-plus it would take to add a resource officer just isn't there, she says.

That's why, sometime this week, Cutter Morning Star will join a small number of Arkansas school districts using the state's security-guard laws either to arm staff members or hire private security officers.

Anderson will be among those carrying guns on campus. She's chosen two other people on the staff who also will either be armed or have easy access to locked-up weapons.

Those two people are not teachers, Anderson quickly adds.

"I am completely against teachers having guns. It's not the teacher's job to deal with that psycho. It's their job to deal with their kids, whether that's hiding them or getting them away."

And guns in classrooms are just a bad idea, she says. "If you arm a teacher, you can't keep a gun where a student couldn't get to it."

That's why Anderson and two other staff members will soon assume the role of security guards, she says.

"I never dreamed this would be something I'd have to do," she says.

"But we love our children. I just want to be the best resource I can to my school and students. I think it's sad that it's come to this, but I really believe everybody ought to have the right to protect ourselves and our kids."

MONEY AN ISSUE

For schools able to afford resource officers, funding such a position is the ideal way to address potential school violence, school administrators agree.

Resource officers are trained lawmen already working for city police departments or for county sheriffs. They are permitted to take their weapons on campus. They also have the authority to make arrests.

But brokering with city and county law enforcement agencies to obtain a resource officer can be costly and, sometimes, politically difficult, school administrators say.

The Ashdown School District, for example, has sampled a variety of school-security measures, with money and local politics often determining the district's course, Superintendent Mike Walker says.

For several years, the Little River County district relied on city police officers to provide school security on their days off, he says.

But that arrangement was not without dispute. At one point, the Police Department wanted the school district to pay those officers overtime, arguing that the lawmen had already put in 40 hours for the city before going on duty at school campuses.

So when one of those officers - "our lead guy," Walker says - got a job at the Little River County sheriff's office, the district worked out an arrangement with the sheriff instead.

“That was not a popular move,” Walker recalls. “There were some hard feelings.”

The new arrangement worked well, however, until the school district’s “lead guy” - Deputy Gary Gregory - ran for office against the sheriff and lost.

“That’s when we picked up and went with our own security,” Walker says.

Ashdown modeled itself after the nearby Texarkana School District, which already had used the state’s security-guard laws to get itself licensed as a private company, thereby allowing the school district to hire and arm its own security officers.

After the Ashdown district obtained its license, five people - most of them reserve deputies or reserve police officers - were commissioned to work for the school on an as-needed basis, Walker says.

Only two worked daily. They wore uniforms provided by the district.

But after Gregory ran for sheriff a second time - and won - the school district worked out an arrangement in which it now reimburses the county for the salary of a deputy who works primarily at the schools.

“That actually cut our costs pretty good,” Walker says, estimating that the district spends \$32,000 annually on its new resource officer.

But at the Lake Hamilton School District in Garland County, Superintendent Steve Anderson estimates that it would cost at least \$50,000 for just one resource officer. That’s why he decided to select certain staff members who, along with their regular duties, serve as commissioned and armed security guards.

Those staff members are part of an emergency response team. Steve Anderson is one them.

He’s never drawn his weapon, but it is there if needed, he says, adding, “This is a stopgap method. It may not be appropriate for every school district, but it is accepted by our parents. I’m an educator, not a Rambo. But I’m going to take care of my kids.”

According to Arkansas State Police records, 10 districts are currently licensed as “companies” that can hire - and arm - their own security guards.

Thirty-five people at those districts are commissioned as private security officers by the Arkansas Board of Private Investigators and Private Security Agencies, which falls under the Arkansas State Police’s purview.

Currently licensed districts include: Ashdown, Fort Smith, Clarksville, Lake Hamilton, Lee County, Little Rock, Nettleton, Pulaski County Special, Westside Consolidated and Texarkana, says Bill Sadler, spokesman for the state police.

But while they are licensed, not all of those districts currently have private security guards on staff.

Records show that Clarksville, Little Rock and Lee County don't have any commissioned officers on their campuses, Sadler says.

And the Pulaski County Special School District currently contracts with municipalities, says security director Derrick Scott.

In most cases, licensed school districts are hiring either reserve or retired law enforcement officers, citing their experience and training.

At the Texarkana School District, security is provided by one school resource officer and five other people commissioned as private security guards.

"Most of my guys are law enforcement," says security director Jeff Black, a former sheriff's deputy. "Some are reserve, and one just retired after 30 years at the Police Department."

Two others, he says, once worked for him at the county jail.

Black works for the school district and at the Stamps Police Department. The latter job is a means of keeping his law enforcement certification, he explains.

This is the fifth year that the district has relied on private security guards, Black says.

"And it's worked great. We have not had any problems. It's paid off for us. Most of our guys have had a lot of training."

Even so, he adds, "It's hard to put your name on the line for someone to carry. This isn't for everyone. But for us, it's a good option."

Adding a second resource officer would be expensive, Black says, estimating a cost of \$75,000 to \$80,000.

Asked about liability concerns, the school administrators interviewed for this story all refer to tort immunity.

Steve Anderson also points to errors and omissions insurance.

But most important, he contends, is the liability that would result from not doing anything to protect students at his schools.

Having guns on campus serves as both a deterrent and a comfort to students, he says.

"We feel like it is appropriate to accept that liability," he adds. "That's why we're very selective and have a limited number of individuals who have this license."

WHO TO ARM?

In rare instances - at the Lake Hamilton School District, for example - security officers are members of the school administration or faculty.

Those employees can serve dual roles as educators and armed security guards by getting commissioned.

Doing so requires a day's training and testing. And to remain commissioned, a security guard must participate in biennial training.

Some describe the one day training session as intense and thorough. Others, however, worry about arming someone who doesn't have a background in law enforcement. They argue that experience trumps training.

Randy Bridges, director of student services at the Fort Smith School District, says he prefers that only those with backgrounds in law enforcement serve as private security officers at his schools.

"I don't feel comfortable with people on our campus with guns unless they are professionals. There are too many things that can go wrong. Even with a professional police officer, there are things that can go wrong."

It's not just extensive training that makes retired or reserve lawmen better security officers, Bridges notes. They also have real-life experience in handling crisis situations.

"We do not want someone on our campus armed who's just received some cursory training," he says firmly.

The Fort Smith district got licensed after a gun incident occurred at one of its schools, and School Board members wondered why the district's lead security officer - a former Barling police sergeant - couldn't carry a gun on campus, Bridges says.

"The School Board became curious. I mean, we've got this guy, he does a great job. He's a current police officer on weekends for the county. But we couldn't arm him."

The district asked the lead security officer, Eric Huber, to look into how he might be able to take a weapon onto campus, which is when administrators learned about the security-guard laws.

The district obtained a license, and Huber was subsequently commissioned.

"It's not concealed," Bridges says of Huber's school weapon. "He keeps it on his side and wears clothing that denotes his school-security status. It's worked fine. Knock on wood, he never has to draw it."

The Nettleton district in Jonesboro has one school resource officer and two private security guards. The need for more than one officer arose because of logistics, says Superintendent James Dunivan.

The district has 3,200 students and seven campuses, which are spread out, he explains. When it became clear that more security staff members were needed, the school's resource officer - who also works as a reserve officer for the Jonesboro Police Department - found out about the state's security-guard laws.

"It was the only avenue we had," Dunivan says.

At the Westside Consolidated district near Jonesboro - where Andrew Golden and Mitchell Johnson killed four of their fellow middle-school students and one teacher in March 1998 - a school resource officer and two private security officers monitor the campus.

The resource officer is a sheriff's deputy, and the security guards have law enforcement backgrounds, says Superintendent Bryan Duffie.

"For us, it works to have separate people do [security]," he adds. "It's a big responsibility. You have to be trained and able to handle that type of responsibility."

LR SAYS NAY TO GUNS

Earlier this year, the Little Rock School Board turned down Superintendent Morris Holmes' recommendation to place armed security guards at the district's elementary schools.

"If it has happened, it can happen," Holmes told the board in a January meeting. "We had 20 kids mowed down," he added referring to the December mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Conn.

"How many places does it have to happen for you to say it can happen in elementary schools?"

Some board members, however, were reluctant to put armed guards in elementary schools without further proof or research to show that such a measure would be safe or effective.

Of 4,089 parents who responded to a survey regarding the matter, 86 percent favored armed guards who would be "trained in use of handguns in the event of crisis, as they are in secondary schools." Of the 1,121 staff members who participated, 72 percent favored Holmes' proposal.

The Little Rock School District currently pays half of the salaries of 16 Little Rock police officers who serve as resource officers at all of the high schools and all but three of the middle schools.

MORE TRAINING NEEDED

For Steve Anderson, his authority to carry a gun on campus has proved reassuring to parents and staff members, he says.

The practice has been in place at Lake Hamilton ever since shootings at Westside near Jonesboro and at Columbine in Littleton, Colo. Anderson has been a commissioned security officer on campus for 12 years now.

Fewer than five staff members also are commissioned to carry weapons on campus. The firearms are kept in a "double-lock situation," he says.

The school district also employs three armed security guards who wear uniforms. Two work part time. The third is a full-time guard.

Until recently, those designated as school security personnel at Lake Hamilton used their personal firearms at school, Anderson says. But after the shooting at Sandy Hook, the district decided to assume the cost of new weapons, practice ammunition and training.

But another element now weighs heavily on Anderson's mind.

"Especially since Sandy Hook, I've been aware that our current level of training - well, I feel like it needs to be expanded."

Earlier this year, Anderson and two of his security officers attended a training session in Little Rock. The training was geared toward law enforcement and school resource officers. It was during that session that Anderson came to a realization: The one day of training required to be an armed security guard probably isn't enough.

"Originally, I felt like 40 hours every year was way too much for our specific job," Anderson says, referring to recommendations made by legislators when discussing gun laws.

"I'm not so sure that that is too much anymore."

In the next year, Anderson plans to put more focus on getting additional training for himself and the staff members who carry weapons. But he remains adamant that today's world makes guns on campus a necessity.

"This is kind of uncharted territory. It's just something we've dedicated ourselves to."